



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

A historic property with a bright future

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Image: 329 N. Washington Street. Photo, Library of Congress.

The impressive gabled Federal style building at 329 N. Washington St. originally was built in 1821 as a two-story tenant residence by John C.

Mandell, a local real estate speculator who also acted as property manager and rent collector for other Alexandria landowners. Historically, the property often has been referred to as the Old Leadbeater House, and members of that important Alexandria family may have rented the property from Mandell in the early years after its construction.

In 1832 the dwelling was acquired by William Gregory, a well-respected Scottish importer and the proprietor of a local dry goods store. Gregory specialized in selling carpets and other wool products produced at his family's factory in Kilmarnock, Scotland. At the time, Gregory paid \$4,000 for the property, and immediately implemented plans to enlarge the structure for his growing household.

Constrained by the limitations of the corner lot at Princess Street, Gregory enlarged the structure vertically by one and a half stories, with the addition crowned by a dentiled masonry cornice. Under Gregory's careful directions, the original architectural features and building fabric were replicated, including the Flemish bond of the brick and the Aquia stone trim on the keystones and window sills. By reducing the height of the third floor building windows, Gregory achieved a sense of dimensionality, making the house appear larger than it actually was. Of particular note in this photograph, taken around 1960, is the old carriage step on North Washington Street, just opposite the front door.

The house remained in the Gregory family for over a century and William's daughter, Mary Gregory Powell, became one of the city's most noted historians and penned a record of significant townspeople and events titled, "The History of Old Alexandria, Virginia." In 1937, 329 N. Washington St. passed from the Gregory heirs to Dr. Martin Delaney, who used the property as his office and residence





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for fifty years until his death. Interestingly, four of Delaney's sons followed their father into the medical profession. One of the last remaining free-standing private homes on Washington Street, the old Gregory homestead soon will be converted into a French country inn by restaurant company La Bergerie.

"Out of the Attic" is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as "Marking Time" and explored Alexandria's history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into "Out of the Attic" and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.

These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by Amy Bertsch, former Public Information Officer, and Lance Mallamo, Director, on behalf of the Office of Historic Alexandria.